Each year following the chaos of Spirit Week students shed their wacky costumes, put on sport coats and dresses, and pretend to be part of a more refined society in which boys hold doors and girls wear flowers on their wrists. This is the Homecoming Dance at Charlotte Catholic.

The Homecoming festivities begin with a group gathering for pictures, an event that begins harmlessly but often develops into a photographic feeding frenzy. Pictures of each couple from every angle are absolutely vital. Often flowers have to be exchanged several times so each parent can get the perfect snapshot. A picture of the entire group is a must. Then one with only girls. Then just the boys. He who closes his eyes at the flash forces the group to suffer an additional three pictures. She who accidentally looks away causes another four. Smiles become plastered on the faces of the photographed, facial muscles lose all function, until finally, mercifully the photo shoot comes to an end. The parents want to get to the restaurant in time to take pictures there too.

Dinner gives the males of the group an opportunity to showcase their finely practiced manners in front of their dates. On this evening all girls are incapable of opening doors and pulling back their chairs, and the boys courteously aid them in these tasks. The group stalls at the restaurant for as long as possible, wanting to arrive at the dance sometime later than fashionably late. The boys pay for their dates’ dinners, and they finally depart for the dance.

The dance itself lacks the formal atmosphere of pictures and dinner. The music is loud and fast, the lights bright and flashing, and the most popular dance move is to jump up and down. Boutonnieres and corsages litter the floor, along with the hearts of those who were denied a dance with their special someone. Teacher chaperones patrolling the edge of the gym remind students that they are still under adult control, at least somewhat. Most groups make only a brief appearance at the dance before moving on to other activities, and hours of preparation result in just a fifteen minute stay at the night’s main event.

Once the dance loses its appeal, groups of students leave the school and gather at various houses throughout the area. There, students engage in good, clean fun such as playing board games and watching movies. Sport coats and dresses have become t-shirts and sweatpants and the photo shoot feels like ancient history. Students are behaving normally again, the magic of Homecoming slowly wears off, and soon Sunday arrives, bringing with it forgotten homework assignments and thoughts of yesterday.